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CONTENTS

Views from The Watch Tower.....223
Social Unrest Grows Apace.....223
Increase of Knowledge the Cause.....224
Politicians Are Seeing Things.....224
"Men's Hearts Failing Them for Fear".....225
Baptists Divided on Communion
Question.....225
Victorious Christ Heads Procession.....226
Leading Forth Captives.....227
"He Gave Gifts Unto Men".....227
Not Given to Convert the World.....228
"The Word Was Made Flesh".....229
A Body Given for the Purpose of Death.....229
"I Come to Do Thy Will".....230
Deliverance to the Captives.....232
The Truth That Angered.....232
Faithful Unto Death.....233
Bound by an Unholy Oath.....233
Some Interesting Letters.....234
Berean Questions in Scripture Studies.....235

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BETHEL HYMNS FOR AUGUST

After the close of the hymn the Bethel Family listens to the reading of "My Vow Unto the Lord," then joins in prayer. At the breakfast table the MANNA text is considered. Hymns for August follow: (1) 60; (2) 4; (3) 109; (4) 47; (5) 91; (6) 145; (7) 152; (8) 111; (9) 110; (10) 127; (11) 260; (12) Vow; (13) 209; (14) 320; (15) 105; (16) 155; (17) 93; (18) 136; (19) 7; (20) 137; (21) 307; (22) 114; (23) 222; (24) 109; (25) 305; (26) 215; (27) 130; (28) 213; (29) 19; (30) 62; (31) 60.

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::R5061 : page 223::

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

SOCIAL UNREST GROWS APACE

OUR READERS know better than do the majority of people the meaning of the present social unrest. Many of them have been studying this subject with us from the standpoint of the Divine Plan of the Ages for more than thirty years. Steadily the unrest which the Bible predicted for the present time--the Harvest of this Age-- is culminating. Many know our expectations respecting October, 1914--that thereabouts the Time of Trouble will gain full headway and sweep the social structure as a besom of destruction.

While pointing out these things from the Word of God our journal has done all in its power to counsel peace, contentment, faithfulness of heart, appreciation of our multiplied mercies and blessings, the like of which humanity never before enjoyed. More than this, THE WATCH TOWER has striven faithfully in all these thirty-five years past to establish the foundation for true peace amongst the Lord's people--an exact knowledge of God, a correct

understanding of the Divine Word and an appreciation of the Divine attributes.

To some extent the Divine blessing has attended our labors. Thousands of Christian people have been awakened, enlightened and brought back to the firm foundation of faith in God and in the Bible. Tens of thousands who have not come to a full consecration of their hearts to the Lord have, nevertheless (according to their letters), taken their stand for righteousness and truth, against sin and error. In these and through these to their families, friends and neighbors a testimony has gone out respecting "Love Divine, all love excelling," which has brought many into closer relationship with God, to a greater reverence of His Word and to a considerable faith in respect to the Divine Plan of the Ages. Hundreds of thousands no longer believe that God used His wisdom and power in human creation to bring into being thousands of millions doomed to eternal torture.

The glorious character of God is shining more resplendently in the world than ever before. The light is going forth in about twenty different languages and to practically every nation. We have not succeeded in effecting great things for the world. We did not so convince the nations that they turned from selfishness and sin to righteousness and love. We have not gotten them to "beat their swords into plowshares, nor their spears into pruning-hooks" (`Isa. 2:4`), nor have we reason to expect that kind of success to follow our labors. From the very beginning we announced the Scriptural Program to be that only the wise should understand and that "none of the wicked should understand" (`Dan. 12:10`) and that during this Age only the Elect class will be brought into full harmony with God.

We pointed out from the beginning that the world, full of selfishness, would wreck the present civilization and that God, according to the Bible, will use that great Time of Trouble--anarchy, confusion--as a means to an end, and upon

the ruins of the highest civilization the world has yet known, wrecked by human selfishness, God will in His own due time erect the Messianic Kingdom, which for centuries He has promised and which eventually will bring the foretold blessing to Israel and to all the nations of the earth. If we were obliged thus to prophesy evil things, we were glad that we could also prophesy glorious things, everlasting blessing, the silver lining to the cloud.

A little more than two years remain before the climax of trouble we anticipate--if we are exactly right about the time. If we are not exactly right, surely we are not far astray, our enemies themselves being the witnesses.

Look at the state of the world. Europe is seething with a Socialism which indeed numbers amongst its hosts many men of noble impulses who fancy that the course they are taking is the only one to bring about a more equitable distribution of the rapidly increasing wealth of the world. Other less noble men in the ranks of the Socialists are thinking evidently less of justice, of a general betterment of society and of a more equitable arrangement of the world's riches, than of their own selfish interests. Others in this growing army of Socialism appear to be wholly demagogic--ignorant prattlers upon subjects which they do not comprehend.

The wage-workers of the world, under the names of Syndicalism, Socialism, etc., have finally realized that the progress of the world really depends upon the coal miners, engineers, machinists, etc. They do not dispute, of course, that brain capacity is also necessary, but they are inclined to say, and still more to think that brain power and Capital have appropriated the lion's share of earth's bounties for a long time and that now Labor must have the lion's share, even if force be required to obtain it.

The governments of Europe are in perplexity. They wonder and fear what a day

or a year may develop, but hope for the best. Their chief consolation seems to be to claim that "all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world" (`2 Pet. 3:4`), and that no radical

::R5062 : page 224::

change in the affairs of humanity need be expected. Indeed, while Labor feels its power, Capital also feels its strength. Capital says that if Labor should attempt to block the wheels of industry and progress, Labor would be the first to feel the pangs of hunger and would be glad to compromise the situation. It is this confidence on both sides of the question that gives the situation the most serious aspect. When the struggle comes, both parties will feel so confident that neither will be ready to compromise and the results will be the more terrible.

INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE IS THE CAUSE

Strange as it may at first appear, it is unquestionably true that the troubles upon us are the results of increased knowledge amongst the masses. When people did not know their power, they were content. The ascertainment of their power has brought them discontent and is leading on to anarchy. Had the knowledge come a thousand years sooner, the trouble would have come a thousand years earlier. Had the knowledge come two thousand years sooner, so would have come the discontent, the trouble. It comes now because Divine providence has been gradually lifting the veil of ignorance as the morning of the New Dispensation is nearing. We have not yet experienced the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, but we have with us the early gray dawn.

The world is awakening before the Master-Hand of the Messianic Kingdom, the Controller of earth's affairs. Civilization will wreck itself in its ignorant use

and selfish abuse of the wonderful riches which Divine providence is showering upon mankind today through the increase of knowledge. The lesson is evident--the recompense also. All the blessings which we have would do good and not harm were it not for the selfishness and hardness of heart which have come upon humanity. Strange to say, this selfishness and hard-heartedness is more manifest amongst the civilized nations than amongst the peoples of India, China and Japan, although all have it, and although the more civilized of mankind cloak their selfishness in many ways.

Selfishness is never grateful. It never cries Enough! Even its gifts and benefactions are likely to be selfishly bestowed. All this is the result of original sin. Disobedience to the Divine Word has brought gradual opposition to the Divine Spirit of love, kindness, mercy. Tender-heartedness has given place to hard-heartedness. The strife that is coming will undoubtedly be most severe amongst those possessed of large knowledge and great blessings--and this means Europe and America, although the same malignant influence will assuredly exert itself throughout the world.

Just at the appropriate time religion lost its power. Churchianity came instead of Christianity, forms of godliness instead of the Spirit of the Lord. What led up to this? The educators and preachers of the world lost their faith in the Bible. Gradually the spirit of unbelief and the theory of evolution (that man was evolved from lower forms of life and not created) have spread through all the colleges, seminaries, schools and school-books. Now the person who possesses faith in a personal, intelligent, just, wise, powerful and loving God, is considered a simpleton.

Wealthy men have endowed colleges and schools to teach unbelief and Evolution. And now these same men stand aghast with wonder that the people whose faith has been destroyed by Higher Criticism and evolutionary doctrines

have no longer faith in God's Word nor in God's providence and are determined to take matters into their own hands. Is it strange? Is it not merely the logical outcome that should have been expected? Do we not see here fulfilled the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall not be manifest"? (`Isa. 29:14`.) The prudent men are the wealthy, whose generosity has been showered upon these colleges which are doing so destructive a work in the minds of men and preparing them to destroy the very foundations of our present civilization.

POLITICIANS ARE SEEING THINGS

Two great political conventions have been held which have had an awakening and enlightening influence on the minds of many. The candidates have spoken out with considerable freedom. The charges generally made and generally believed are that in each of the two principal parties there is a warfare in progress between a "stand-pat" element (willing to yield nothing) and a reform element. The former have apparently the more particular backing of the financial world and the Church influence, Catholic and Protestant. The other, or more progressive party, realizes in some measure the real condition of things in the world today--realizes that Capital must make concessions to Labor and must improve Labor conditions or else a social revolution is inevitable. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan are the prominent standard-bearers of the progressive thought in the two great parties. They represent millions of the middle-class people and millions of sympathizers in religious circles and in the world.

The **Boston Globe** quotes Mr. Roosevelt as saying, "With unflinching heart and undimmed eye, we stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord." Then the **Globe** quotes the Scripture to which Mr. Roosevelt refers in `Rev. 16:16-18`: "And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon.** And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air;

and there came a great voice out of the Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, saying, 'It is done.' And there were voices and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great."

We cannot but wonder how much of what he said Mr. Roosevelt believes and appreciates. But the same thought is in the minds of others who profess little knowledge of or faith in the Bible. The **Cincinnati Post,** for instance, commenting on the same subject, says:

"And no one knows what it all means now or next week or before another generation has begun to crawl.

"Men talk among themselves--experienced newspaper men, men who have attended political conventions for years. But they don't print what they talk and don't talk all that they fear.

"There is a feeling that history is being made in a more mysterious manner than any of us can understand --that something is moving more powerfully than any of us can comprehend--and however much men predict or hazard guesses, nobody knows.

"Sometimes one forgets it is a Republican convention and sees only two tremendous forces about to clash. It is people who are stirring, not mere partisans. And it is the same spirit of unrest, the same mysterious uprising and breaking forth from beneath of a wonderful and awful power that has been breaking forth in spots all over the world."

If, however, it be conceded that the financial powers have set themselves in opposition to progress, those who know the power of money may well fear that

the chances of the progressives are small. The money power, through the banks and bankers, has its influence upon all borrowers of money. There lies the danger. The power which can thus control nearly all of the influential is in danger of carrying its power too far and sitting upon the safety-valve

::R5062 : page 225::

until the explosion takes place--just such an explosion as the Bible warns us to expect.

What should be the attitude of God's consecrated people at this time? They should remember the Master's words and not be alarmed. He said, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads, for your deliverance draweth nigh." (`Luke 21:28`.) This does not mean that we should ever act or feel boastfully, or even carelessly, respecting the welfare of humanity so seriously at stake. It means that with quiet confidence we may look up to God, and, realizing His omnipotence, wisdom and love, we may trust Him where we cannot trace Him and rest assured that all things are working together for good--especially for the Church, but indirectly also for the interests of all humanity.

God's consecrated people should more than ever "set their affections on things above and not on things on the earth." (`Col. 3:2`.) More than all, we should spend time and influence in the service of God, of the Truth, of our families and of all men, so far as we have opportunity. We should do them good, calming instead of arousing their fears. Instead of dilating particularly upon the trouble coming, we should expatiate especially upon the time beyond the trouble, encouraging them to faith in the Omnipotent One who has promised that through the Seed of Abraham "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." --`Gal. 3:29`.

Today we have wonderful opportunities. The world is waking up and inquiring about the meaning of the wonderful things of our day. Intelligent people are perplexed. They need the very light upon the Divine Plan which we have for them. The Golden Rule bids us do toward them as we would have them do towards us, if we were in the dark and they in the light. The Class Extension work is being greatly blessed and is reaching many. The Colporteur work is gathering, we believe, many ripe grains.

On the whole, the Lord's blessing seems to be specially manifest thus far this year. No doubt many who are now receiving the Truth respecting the Harvest time, etc., have been God's children for a considerable time, and under Divine providential guidance, direction, discipline, in preparation for the Kingdom. To these Present Truth comes as a special blessing and refreshment and as a

::R5063 : page 225::

special ripening for the Kingdom. Today's opportunities become tests also of our love and loyalty to God. "He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." (`John 4:36`.) Freely have we received, freely let us give to others the glorious light of Present Truth.--`Matt. 10:8`.

MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR

There is a general apprehension of something unusual and fearful. Religious people of all denominations are distressed, as well as politicians and financiers. Large sums of money are still forthcoming, but chiefly from the wealthy. And these are growing weary of their trials as the supporters, "pillars," of their respective systems. Church attendance grows more slim, and many who do attend service confess that their worship is largely a form of godliness and

custom and habit rather than an intelligent appreciation of their privileges. The people believe --they know not what. The "new thought" offered them as a soul-satisfying portion is, "Our forefathers generations back were monkeys." There is nothing soul-satisfying in this statement. The true-hearted are starving, not for bread, nor for water, but for hearing the Word of the Lord. (`Amos 8:11`.) The formalists are discouraged because of lack of numbers. All are in dread lest some one should ask questions respecting the various creeds of Churchianity, knowing that no one of intelligence can defend even one creed of Christendom.

Various schemes have been tried. Various good endeavors have been made to awaken the public to an interest in religious things. The public interest in Churchianity has died out. Evolution and Higher Criticism have undermined faith. The public say, "The preachers themselves do not believe the Bible. Why should we?"

Finally, the solemn thought is being pressed home daily that a great trial time has come upon Christianity as a whole--a day of judgment; and that in harmony with the adage, "In union there is strength," all Christian people should draw together for mutual support. The cry is, "A federation" (a confederacy--`Isa. 8:12`). This movement, foretold by the Scriptures, is now nearing a fulfilment, much as the matter was disputed when we called attention to it thirty-five years ago.

As we write, the Conference in Lambeth Palace, London, is in session. The chief representatives of the churches in Great Britain and the United States have assembled to see to what extent they can let down the bars of custom and superstition and recognize Protestant Christians of all denominations as fellow-Christians of the one Body of Christ--the one Church. Very soon there is to be a general meeting in the United States to which the proposals of the Lambeth

Conference will be submitted.

The feeling of fear, uncertainty, need of union, is so generally felt that undoubtedly many Christians of various denominations will be glad to be associated, federated. The hope is that thus they will present a solid, religious backing to the Government and that the Government will give them in return a support. It will not surely amount to a union between Church and State, as in the old world, but it will amount to an understanding between Church and State, for the State also is feeling its need of backing. The result will be an apparently triumphant Churchianity, a brilliant flare-up of success. However, according to our understanding of the Bible, their prosperity will be short-lived, for it has no real foundation of Christian faith, but merely the excuse of necessity for its federative existence.

With the flare-up of Churchianity's apparent prosperity all not joining in will be esteemed as enemies, however conscientious. And they will have hard experiences for a little while, until the Master shall say, "It is enough. Come up higher." "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations"; "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne"; "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."--`Rev. 2:26`; `3:21`; `2:10`.

BAPTISTS DIVIDED ON COMMUNION QUESTION

"Toronto, Ont., June 15.--The question of restricted communion was discussed by the Toronto Association of Baptist Churches in Parkdale Baptist Church yesterday. The leading speaker on the subject was the Rev. J. J. Ross, who maintained that "the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is unmistakably a restricted ordinance, and those who partake of it unworthily will bring

judgment upon themselves.

"The debate was opened in the morning, but gave way to other topics until it was resumed by arrangement in the midst of the Women's Missionary Conference in the afternoon. A lively period of three-quarters of an hour was given up to it. Mr. A. M. Denovan took the view that it was never proven that Christ did not baptize infants a span long. Rev. T. T. Shields quickly retorted

::R5063 : page 226::

that it certainly had been proven that He had never done so.

"A heated discussion followed between those who maintained that the love of God in people's hearts entitled them to a place at the communion table, and the others who rigidly held that the only passport was immersion.

"An extra session was held at 6:30 p.m., when the discussion was vigorously continued. No decision was reached."--**Woodstock, Ont., Daily Express.**

Our Baptist brethren are having their troubles. After more than eighteen centuries they are half inclined to believe that they have made a huge mistake! Perhaps all the heathen who have not been baptized did not go to hell and are not still there roasting! Perhaps the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, etc., are not in hell for similar insufficiency of water!

Perhaps, after all, it has been a mistake that our Baptist friends have been excluding others from their communion table--claiming that, not being completely immersed in water, these are not members of the true Church of Christ, not eligible to heaven, etc. It is certainly time that our dear Baptist

brethren became established with definite ideas about baptism, or else they should take that particular word from their denominational name.

The foregoing suggestion from the **Daily Express** respecting the baptism of infants is an outgrowth of the general misunderstanding of the subject of baptism.

The Bible teaches clearly enough that Christians are baptized into the Church, which is the Body of Christ, but nowhere does it say that it is the water baptism which inducts the believer into Christ. On the contrary, it most explicitly declares that the real, true baptism is baptism "into Christ's death." To be immersed into Christ's death plainly enough means to have a participation with the Redeemer in the death which He died--death to self-will, death to earthly hopes and aims and prospects. Only such as are thus immersed into His death will be in His likeness in the resurrection. "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him"; "If we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him."--`Rom. 6:4-6`; `Col. 2:12`; `2 Tim. 2:12,11`.

If our Baptist brethren come to see what the true baptism is, they will all the more appreciate the water baptism as merely a symbol of the true immersion. Our baptism into Christ's death inducts us into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, whose names are written in heaven.--`Eph. 1:22,23`; `Heb. 12:23`.

Throughout this Age some Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and others have had this real baptism into Christ's death, and accordingly have had their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. These constitute the members of the One Church. Some of them were confused on the subject of baptism and used **sprinkling**--incorrectly, unscripturally. Others used immersion unscripturally--the Disciple friends

thinking it the same as the Jewish baptism practised at the first advent of our Lord, for the remission of sin and for bringing Israel back into harmony with the Law Covenant. Others used water immersion improperly instead of the real immersion into Christ's death. The true view of the subject shows that we all in the past have been more or less in error. Humiliating as this fact is, it needs to be learned if we would make any progress.

YET ANOTHER LESSON

Another lesson we need to learn is that not merely the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is to be saved, but that God has a salvation--although a very different one-- for others.--`Heb. 2:3`; `Jude 3`.

Under the creeds formulated during the Dark Ages we supposed that since the whole world is under Divine condemnation, therefore every infant is so condemned. We were right in this, but wrong in respect to the **character** of the condemnation. None of our race were condemned to eternal torment or purgatory. The Bible explicitly tells us that we were condemned to **death.** (`Rom. 6:23`; `Gen. 2:17`; `3:19`.) As a consequence mankind are a dying race. The dying processes of the six thousand years have affected the race mentally, morally and physically.--`Psa. 51:5`; `Jer. 31:29,30`.

Only those baptized into Christ's death and thus vitally united to the living Head of the Church, have as yet escaped from the condemnation which rests upon the world. But God's provision, which begins with the Church, will proceed, after her glorification, to bless the world. (`Gal. 3:8,16,29`.) Then all the non-elect, all the unbaptized, all out of Christ--infants, heathen, **all**--will be subjects of the blessed Millennial Kingdom. All will have the opportunity, not to be baptized into the Body of Christ, but to experience the promised restitution to human perfection and earthly paradise--all that was lost in Eden,

all that was redeemed at Calvary.--`Acts 3:19-21`.

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::R5066 : page 226::

VICTORIOUS CHRIST HEADS PROCESSION

**"When He ascended up on high He
led a multitude of captives."--`Eph. 4:8`.**

THIS GRAND EXPRESSION respecting the glorious outcome of the Savior's work is quoted by the Apostle Paul from the `Psalms. (68:18`.) The figure thus thrust before our mental eye is that of a great Conqueror whose victory is being heralded. With the Romans we know that it was a custom that generals returning from various wars were granted what were termed "Triumphs"-- that is to say, triumphal processions, that the people might have tangible evidence of their victories.

Thus, for instance, Titus, returning from the war upon the Jews in A.D. 70, brought with him certain notable persons and the Golden Candlestick from the Temple, and these were displayed to the eyes of the people following the conqueror. They were subsequently sculptured on the Arch of Titus, still standing in Rome. And evidently the custom was still older than the days of the Romans, since it was so prophetically set forth by the Prophet David.

Let us permit our mental eye to feast upon the scene presented in our text. Jesus, in fulfilment of the Divine Program, had left the heavenly condition and descended to earth, taking a bondman's form or nature in order "that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man" (`Heb. 2:9`); in order that He

might rescue Adam and his race from the dying and death condition in which they were--under Divine sentence and under the power of Satan.

Therefore the Redeemer counted not His life precious to Him, but freely delivered Himself up for our offenses and died, "the Just for the unjust," that He might bring mankind back into harmony with God. His humiliation ended in death, but His triumph began when, as is recorded, God raised Him from the dead by His own power, and set him at the right hand of His own Majesty--"far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

::R5066 : page 227::

HE THAT ASCENDED FIRST DESCENDED

The prophecy says nothing about our Lord's descending from the heavenly glory to the earthly nature, but St. Paul supplies this feature saying, "He that ascended, what is it but that He first descended, into the lower condition of the earth?" (`Verse 9`.) Thus the Apostle asserts that He that descended is He that ascended above all heights, that all things may be fulfilled through Him.

An important thought here noted is that our Lord not only left the heavenly glory, but that He returned to a still more excellent glory--He did not suffer the disastrous loss of the heavenly nature as a result of His obedience in taking the human nature. As He left the heavenly nature to take the human, so in returning He left the human nature to ascend again to that which He had before, with the additional glory of the divine nature.

LEADING FORTH THE CAPTIVES

With most of the conquerors in olden times the captives were made slaves. Not so, however, will be the result of Jesus' victory. He leads forth to liberty and eternal life those who have been slaves of sin and death. His train of captives is a long one indeed; the procession has already occupied **eighteen centuries,** and is yet to be the great work of the **thousand years** of the Messianic reign!

First of all in the procession are the saints--"the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven." In the forefront of them we see the twelve Apostles, St. Paul taking the place of Judas. The Apostles are to be Kings who are to reign with Christ in preeminent positions; but following them are some others of the saintly company of Kings--in all a "little flock."

Then will come a company, more numerous, but less heroic--"a great multitude," uncrowned, but with "palm branches," not antitypical Priests, but antitypical Levites, associates and servants of the Royal Priesthood, the Bride. Then will follow (`Heb. 11:38-40`) other faithful ones of the past, the Ancient Worthies. The Prophet speaks also of the "rebellious house." The classes previously specified were not rebellious, but gladly and willingly forsook all to do the will of the Father and to attain the liberty of sons of God, as the first-fruits of the triumph of the Lamb.

But during the thousand years of Christ's reign He will lead forth the "rebellious house"--the world of mankind-- not all of them, we may be sure, for some, the Scriptures positively declare, will die the Second Death, because, after realizing their deliverance, they will love sin and will therefore be destroyed as enemies of righteousness. But it is a blessed thought that many of those who are now aliens, strangers and foreigners from God through wicked works, are in this condition of opposition, not willingly, not intelligently, but by reason of the ignorance and weaknesses which came to them by heredity, under the reign of sin and death.

It is to be a distinct feature of the great Triumph of Immanuel that every eye shall be opened and every ear unstopped, that "the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth," during His glorious reign of righteousness. Are we not distinctly told of the time that will follow, in which all the willing and obedient shall receive the Holy Spirit, which then will be poured out "upon all flesh" even as now, during this Gospel Age, it is poured out upon God's "servants and handmaidens" only?-- `Joel 2:28`.

Oh, that will be a glorious Triumph for the great Redeemer! In the language of the Bible, "He shall see the fruitage of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (`Isa. 53:11`.) What a glorious fruitage!--not only His own exaltation--not only the exaltation of His faithful Bride class, and the additional exaltation of "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," and the exaltation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets, but finally the deliverance to human perfection of all the groaning creation willing to accept the same upon the Divine terms of loyalty to God and to the principles of His Government, as these shall be made known to them.

"HE GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN"

It was the custom in olden times that a king coming into authority and power should give gifts according to His wealth. Governors and princes would be needed and he would dispense the honors of these offices to those found

::R5067 : page 227::

faithful in his service, loyal in the defense of His cause. So, in this prophetic reference to our Lord's ascension, it is declared not only that He would lead forth a multitude of captives, granting them freedom, liberty, blessings, but also

that He would confer certain gifts.

We might have spent valuable time guessing the nature of these gifts which the great Redeemer would dispense, but such a waste of time is unnecessary, since the Apostle proceeds to explain the matter and tells us what gifts are meant. He says, "And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."

There is an astounding thought connected with this statement--that the Apostles were not self-appointed, and that they had no successors, and that the work of evangelizing, or making known the "good tidings," and the pastoral work and the teaching work amongst believers, are all under the supervision of the Head of the Church, the great Victor, who redeemed us with His blood, and who proposes, first, to lead forth a Bride class, and subsequently all the willing and obedient.

It behooves us to notice that the Apostle does not intimate that Jesus gave to some Methodism, to others Presbyterianism, and others Roman Catholicism, etc. No, when we held such thoughts it was because of more or less misunderstanding --because we failed to see first that there is but the "one Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven," and second, that that one Church is not any of the various sects and parties, but includes the saintly in all of these; "the Lord knoweth them that are His."

NOT GIVEN TO CONVERT THE WORLD

Noting carefully the Apostle's argument in connection with our text, we perceive that the Master did not give these gifts for the conversion of the world. He does specify, however, what they were for, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

Body of Christ"--the Church, the Bride class. Is it supposable that the Apostle erred in this statement and that the fact is the reverse--that these gifts were provided for the conversion of the world, and that the Apostle thoroughly misunderstood the matter and supposed that they were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ? No! We are to be taught by the Apostle and may be sure that there is no mistake, no error in his statement.

Notice the force of the expression, "the perfecting of the saints." It is not sufficient that believers have a little knowledge, a little faith, and a measure of sanctification or devotion to the Lord, for after they have received and attained all of these things they still need the instruction of the Apostles and ministers, pastors and teachers, provided by the great Head of the Church for their perfecting. Ah! there is a force and depth of meaning in that word **perfecting.** We remember that of our Head it is written, "Being made perfect through suffering, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey

Him." So His followers are made perfect through suffering.

The Master's perfecting, indeed, was a little different from ours, and yet there is a similarity between the two. He was perfect before He humbled Himself; He was still perfect as the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself; but as a result of His consecration He received a begetting of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature, and His development as a New Creature required that He faithfully carry out His vow, or covenant of sacrifice, in the doing of the will of the Heavenly Father. By such faithfulness He perfected Himself on the divine plane--that is, He proved Himself worthy according to the covenant--"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory, honor, dominion and power."--`Rev. 5:12`.

Similarly the followers of Jesus are to be sharers with Him in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories which shall follow, for "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." (`2 Tim. 2:12`.) Although we are imperfect in the flesh, while He was perfect, yet the robe of His righteousness, the merit of His sacrifice, covers all of our blemishes and makes us, as His footstep followers, holy and acceptable before the Father, as joint-sacrificers with Jesus.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit starts us in the life divine. We are not to be perfected in the flesh, but in the spirit, and our perfection and acceptance with the Father will be demonstrated by our loyalty of heart and the fulness and thoroughness with which we submit our all to the Divine will and seek to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His. (`I Cor. 6:20`.) Our justification comes to us as a reward of faith, regardless of works, but our glorification will follow as a reward for faithfulness.

THESE GIFTS ARE LASTING

Not merely for a few days or years were these gifts to the Church provided; on the contrary, they were to endure throughout this entire Age, until the Church perfected shall pass beyond the veil and be forever with her Redeemer, to share His glory, honor and immortality. The Lord from time to time has raised up evangelists, pastors and teachers for this glorious service of preparing the "chaste virgin," the Church, to be the Bride in glory. But the Apostolic office, as represented in The Twelve specially provided by the Father, has continued and needs no replenishment. We still have their instructions as fully as the early Church, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."-- `2 Tim. 3:16,17`.

That the Apostle did not understand the matter to be merely for a day, but throughout this Age, until the completion of the Church, is clearly evidenced by his statement, namely, that all these gifts were for the edification of the Body of Christ and the perfecting of the saints to the last--"until we all come to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

This is a wonderful statement, however we view it. Shall we say that it applies to each individual member of the Church of Christ, and that each individual must come into that full unity of faith, and that full knowledge of the Son of God, and the perfection of manhood in Christ, and to a developed stature of maturity in Christ? Or shall we understand the meaning to be, until the entire Church of Christ shall have reached a full knowledge and shall, as a whole, have come to the condition of a perfect Man, of which Christ is the Head and we are the members --to the full development or stature of the Anointed, the Messiah, Head and members? We believe that the latter is the Apostle's thought.

Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that the selection of these members all the way down the Age must have been along the lines here indicated. Individually, one partially developed would not be fitted for the Kingdom. One not in the unity of the faith would not be suitable. One not developed to the proper measure or stature as a Christian would not be suitable. Nothing is more plain than that the individual Christian needs a great deal of instruction, edification, building up in the holy faith, testing, proving, chiseling, polishing, fitting, preparing before he shall be ready for a place in the Kingdom.

GOD'S PEOPLE NO LONGER NEED BE MISLED

This thought is confirmed by the succeeding verses, in which the Apostle tells

us that by the assistance of these, the Divinely provided gifts, teachers, etc., God's people need no longer, like children, to be tossed to and fro, and be misled by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness of those who would deceive. On the contrary, being sincere, and speaking the truth in love, they are to grow up into membership in the Anointed One in all things--coming fully and completely into fellowship and obedience, under the Head, even Christ.--`Verses 14,15`.

Proceeding, the Apostle tells us that all who are recognized as members of the Body of Christ must be properly joined to the Head--by a proper compact, or covenant, intelligently made and fully intended. This union must be compacted, and it requires the entire Gospel Age to effect this development and compacting as members, that the whole Body of the Anointed may be one--symmetrical, beautiful, co-operative--making increase in its members and edifying itself in love--growing in grace and in knowledge and in character-likeness to the Head.--`V. 16`.

In conclusion, then, the Captain of our Salvation has gone before, He has accepted us as His joint-heirs, and we are following on, blest by the gifts which He dispensed when He ascended up on high; and we, in turn, will be His gifts to the world of mankind. When as Priests and Kings we shall be associated with our Lord, we shall bless all the families of the earth with a glorious opportunity of knowledge and obedience, that they may, if they will, attain life everlasting, "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."--`Rom. 6:23`.

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::R5064 : page 228::

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH"

OUR FINITE MINDS have difficulty in understanding some of the deep things of Scripture because of our insufficiency of knowledge and of experience. All that we know of our Lord's pre-human existence is revealed in the Word of God. The Scriptures state that our Lord was rich and **became** poor; not that He **remained rich** and **seemed** to become poor, but that He actually became poor that we might become rich. The Apostle says that He divested Himself of those conditions that He had before He became human, and that He took a bondman's form. He was made flesh. The explanation is given, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," a human body, and thus He was made "a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death."--`Heb. 10:5`; `2:9`.

Putting together the Scriptural statements on the subject we have this: In His pre-human existence our Lord was the **Logos,** "the beginning of the creation of God," the Alpha of all God's creation, and the Omega in that Jehovah created only this One. Of the **Logos** it is written, "All things were made by Him, and without Him

::R5064 : page 229::

was not anything made that was made." (`John 1:3`.) He was on the spirit plane, next to the Father.

In the Divine Plan of the Ages, formulated long before, a proposition was made our Lord with a view to the redemption of mankind; provision was made that if obedient to the Father's will, the **Logos** would receive still further exaltation, even to the divine nature. For this joy set before Him, our Lord took the various steps necessary to complete the great work of redemption. The contract into which He entered with the Father was one which involved much humiliation. While there was a sacrifice of power, of honor, of glory, yet no

sacrifice of life was involved in the first step taken; namely, His acceptance of the Father's arrangement that He should be made flesh; that He should become a human being, that He should give up His existence on the heavenly plane.

Originally, as the **Logos,** our Lord was a soul on the spirit plane, in the sense that any intelligent being is a soul; for the word "soul" signifies being; and the transfer of the life principle to a human body brought Him to the earthly plane. The life principle was the same that He had before, therefore the personality was the same. It was important to have identity of mind; and this He had by Divine arrangement.

A BODY GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEATH

The Scriptures do not explain how the spark of life belonging to the spirit being known as the **Logos** became transferred to the human plane. When our Lord was thus changed, He merely took the step of getting ready to become the sacrifice for sinners. In His pre-existent state He could not have given the corresponding price for Adam; for He had not the human life to offer. But when He became a human being and had reached the age of maturity, He was in condition to be the Sin-offering.

We would say that our Lord as a human being was the **same soul** as in His pre-existent condition; for He had the same life principle as before; and that when He became human He did not die as a spirit being. The Scriptures declare that our Lord was "made flesh," a human being; and that the difference between Him and mankind in general was that He was perfect--"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"--separate from the remainder of the human race. (`Heb. 7:26`.) The Scriptures also explain that this difference resulted from the fact that He was specially begotten. The life principle by which He was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father.

This explanation is altogether different from the theory known as Incarnation. The thought of the theory of incarnation is that a spirit being took possession of an earthly being--became incarnate, dwelt in the flesh, in the same way that some are possessed of evil spirits which dwell within them. This, we believe, is a wrong thought respecting our Lord which has come down from the "Dark Ages." There is nothing in the Scriptures about **incarnation.** The Scriptures do not say that our Lord's **body** died, while the **spirit being** within it remained alive. But the Bible says that our Lord left the glory which He had with the Father and was found in fashion as a man; that He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross; that He was "put to death in the flesh."--`John 17:4,5`; `I Pet. 3:18`; `Phil. 2:8`.

"MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US"

From what we know of childhood we recognize it as the period of development. And so we read of our Lord: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (`Luke 2:40,52`.) His was not a mind that had all the experiences and intelligence of His pre-existent state. We read that He **grew** in wisdom. His **mind** grew. Of course, being perfect He would learn much more rapidly and accurately than would others; and this accounts for the fact that as a child He was able to confound the Doctors of the Law. With His natural qualities of mind He was able to grasp the situation, to take in things rapidly.

St. Luke tells us that at the age of twelve years our Lord accompanied His mother and Joseph to Jerusalem. The Jewish children were accustomed to attending religious services; and it was a custom that Jewish boys should make a consecration at the age at which Jesus did. Jesus knew that He was different

from other boys. Very likely He told them the facts relating to His miraculous birth. It is assumed by some that He was even charged with having an illegitimate birth. But since we do not know definitely about this, we must confine ourselves to the Scriptures.

Our Lord came into the world in a miraculous manner for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies, which were all to attain fulfilment in Him. Naturally He would avail Himself of the first opportunity of ascertaining the requirements. When at twelve years of age He learned from the Doctors of the Law that He could not assume the priestly function as a boy, He made no further attempt, but was subject to His parents, or to Mary and her husband, who properly enough were His guardians until He reached thirty years of age, when His first step was to make **full** consecration of Himself.

"I COME TO DO THY WILL"

Our Lord at thirty years of age certainly had much knowledge that Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Our Lord had some knowledge of what constitutes sin and its penalty. He had also knowledge of the fact that God had arranged for the redemption of mankind, through the great Mediator of the New Covenant--a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew that the **inability of others** to keep the Divine Law written in the Decalogue and **His ability** to keep that Law, constituted the difference between Himself and others.

Doubtless our Lord's mother had told Him of His miraculous birth and of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecy of Anna and of Simeon. And He had in mind the prophecy respecting Himself and the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world. All this knowledge was very valuable.

But the thing that our Lord evidently lacked was the knowledge of the deeper things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible; for He had not received the Holy Spirit. Although He might be better qualified to understand these things than were the fallen race, yet, as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (`I Cor. 2:14`.) Jesus had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit; therefore He did not have the understanding of the prophecies and symbols.

"THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED"

All this knowledge began to come upon Him when He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. He began to understand the higher things, the deep things of God. He had understood in a measure about the Lamb that was slain as

::R5064 : page 230::

the sin-offering and the things about the putting away of sin, but nothing to identify the One who was to be the great Deliverer or to explain the wonderful pictures in the Scriptures. Just as soon as He was begotten of the Holy Spirit He began to see that if He would reign, it would be by a manifestation of loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as He was illuminated He saw the things pertaining to the suffering.

During our Lord's earthly ministry He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. (`Heb. 5:8`.) And thus He received the great illumination which was so powerful an addition to Him--just as it is a great illumination to us to see the terms and conditions of our calling--that we must walk in the steps of our Lord if we would reign with Him.

Just in what manner the higher things were revealed to our Lord we may not know. St. Paul tells us of wonderful revelations which were made to him. Doubtless our Lord also had revelations, but just what was revealed to Him thus, in order that He might understand His pre-human conditions, etc., we may not know. Nor do we know how all the acts and experiences during the previous period of His existence before He became flesh could have been impressed suddenly upon His mind. The same God who is able to give us a spirit body which will assimilate all the experiences of the present life, could also

::R5065 : page 230::

impress upon Jesus all the previous experiences which He had had.

The impress of previous experiences did not come to Him during His boyhood; for He was then **growing** in knowledge and in stature, and in favor with God and man. We believe that the impress came at the time of His consecration at Jordan; and that not only had He there given to Him the impress of His previous experiences with the Father and of the remote past, but also that He had light given to Him upon the Scriptures so that He could grasp the full purport of what He had done when He gave Himself in consecration.

As the "heavens" continued to open to our Lord, He would see that the experiences of the Messiah, which could not have been commanded under the Law Covenant, were nevertheless to be His privileges as He would see these to be the Divine will, as He would see these to be the Divine Law in the Prophecies. As a sheep would be dumb before its shearers, so He would not rebel as His rights were taken from Him. He would know that He was to be put to death; and that He was to be an innocent victim. He was to be the crucified One, the antitype of the brazen serpent.

Having consecrated to fulfil all things written in the Book Jesus was fully prepared for His every experience. This we see also is the purport of that beautiful picture in Revelation of the scroll sealed with seven seals. The proclamation was made, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (`Rev. 5:2`.) Up to that time no one had been found who could open the Book. But at that time our Lord was found worthy to open the Book, and to Him was given all the knowledge in the Divine Plan, that He might carry out these things in the sacrificing of the flesh.

At His consecration at Jordan our Lord gave up the human life--He gave up all rights and privileges as a human being. The ultimate purpose of this full surrender of His life was that He might bring everlasting life to mankind. The Father's arrangement with Him, however, was such that He might retain His personality, His identity. But after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was a New Creature; and as a New Creature He had the human body in which to develop character, in which to have His experiences. This New Creature was developed to perfection during the three and one-half years of His ministry, and was ready for the spirit body which had been promised to Him.

If our Lord had not been found perfect, faithful, loyal, in His pre-human condition, He never would have had this privilege of becoming a man and the Redeemer of men. Because of His obedience as a man He received the greater glory, immortality. He was perfect under all the favorable conditions before He became a man; He was faithful as a man, and being glorified, He is still faithful. Therefore He maintains the same relationship to God and to righteousness that He ever had. Consequently He would not specially need any of those things which assist in making character; for He has never shown any defects to be rectified. But we may suppose that the experiences which He had in His pre-existent state, and while He was a man, and since He was glorified,

all cooperate to make His character intelligent and loyal in the very highest sense.

HE "MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY"

Let us examine some Scriptures which might be understood to imply that our Lord had a clear recollection of His pre-human experiences with the Father.

(1) "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (`John 5:19`.) These words were used in connection with the healing of the sick. They do not, of course, mean that the Lord had seen the Father healing the sick, but that He had seen the Father's will, the Father's Plan.

Our Lord was simply carrying out the Father's will concerning Him: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart"; etc. (`Isa. 35:5,6`.) These miracles of healing were some of the things that He was to do, as written in the Scriptures. He knew that He was to do these miracles and that they were a foreshadowing of the things to be done by and by. As we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus... and manifested forth His glory."--`John 2:11`.

(2) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (`Prov. 8:23-25`.) This passage may be viewed either as a prophecy of what our Lord understood of His previous condition, or as a figure of speech setting forth the Wisdom of God all through the ages. But since the Wisdom of God is specially revealed in our Lord Jesus, so this was a

foreshadowing of what Jesus might know respecting His pre-human condition.

(3) When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (`Luke 2:49`) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary, He would know of His miraculous birth and of His special mission in the world. His mother knew that He could not be true to Himself and His mission unless she told Him about these things. Having been told that He was specially holy and miraculously born for this very purpose, He now turned to Mary and asked, Is it possible that you should not know that I should be about My Father's business? Did not you tell me of this thing? He was surprised that Mary

::R5065 : page 231::

and Joseph should not understand that this was the very thing for Him to do.

MEMORY THE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION

(4) Our Lord's statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (`John 8:58`), serves to identify the man Jesus with His previous condition as the **Logos** before He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He is the same today, although He has been received to the spirit plane. He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore." (`Rev. 1:18`.) Originally He was on the spirit plane. Later as a man, He lived; He died. At His resurrection He was made alive on the spirit plane, far above angels, principalities and powers. But the identity, the personality, is the same.

And we can readily believe that the memory of things past is still with our

Lord. We also think that He remembers the experiences which He had in the flesh and also those which He had before He became flesh. Otherwise, He could not identify Himself. Memory seems to be the means of identification of our personality. Nothing in this Scripture would seem to imply that our Lord was born into the world with the knowledge of all His previous experiences. After His consecration He received the knowledge by some means which we are not great enough to understand--by some power the Father used; for the Father has all power.

(5) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (`Heb. 13:8`.) This statement would not identify our Lord with His previous condition; for in His pre-existent state, He was not **Jesus.** He was called Jesus at His birth. He became Jesus Christ at His baptism. "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (`Isa. 53:11`.) Our Lord began to bear the iniquities of the world at His consecration, and finished so doing at His crucifixion. Since then He has been reckoning certain persons to be members of Himself. When the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the heavens were opened unto Him, He probably received the knowledge which would enable Him to overcome.

Before His consecration, when our Lord was a perfect man just as Adam was, we know not what force Satan's temptations would have had; but when His mind was opened, then Satan came to tempt Him along the very line of His work, along the line of the consecration which He had already made. Satan attempted to overthrow His consecration and to thwart its completion. How much knowledge our Lord had we do not know; but the Heavenly Father gave Him sufficient to enable Him to come off conqueror. And so with us. Our Lord gives us knowledge of Himself and of the Father. He shows us the relation between the sufferings of this present time and the glories that are to follow. Thus by knowledge all the members of the Body of this Great Righteous

Servant will be permitted to come off "more than conquerors" by His grace.

THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT PERCEIVE SPIRITUAL THINGS

(6) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (`John 3:11`.) The intimation is that our Lord could tell heavenly things, but that He was not disposed to do so, because Nicodemus and others found it difficult to receive even the earthly things. How could Jesus tell of the heavenly things? By that time He may have had the impress of memory in respect to His pre-existent condition.

We are to tell the heavenly things, but not to the natural man. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (`Matt. 7:6`.) Our Lord said that He had many things to tell His disciples, but that they could not receive them until the Holy Spirit came. (`John 16:12,13`.) And, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (`John 7:39`.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; "but God hath

::R5066 : page 231::

revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (`I Cor. 2:14,10`.) Now if the Holy Spirit reveals some of the deep things to **us,** how much **more** could the perfect mind of our Lord enter into the holy things?

"THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE"

(7) Our Lord's words, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was" (`John 17:5`), would not signify that He had no knowledge of His prospective share in the divine nature. He had the assurance of the Scriptures, one of which was that He should be very high; another that the Lord would give unto Him the Kingdom; another says that Jehovah God would "divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death" (`Isa. 53:12`); still another says, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (`Psa. 110:4`.) He was to be both a Priest and a King of very high state and honor.

Probably our Lord knew these things fully after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, even as St. Paul was caught away to the third heaven and received knowledge of wonderful things "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (`2 Cor. 12:4`.) And so it is most probable that our Lord Jesus had some special revelation; for we read that He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (`John 5:26`); thus indicating His knowledge of the fact that both He and the Church would share in the divine nature and inherency of life.

Our Lord's words show that He was not wishing to aspire to these glorious things. Very humbly He said, "Father, I have come to do Thy will. Father, I shall perform the work Thou hast given Me to do and I shall be glad to be returned to the glory I had with Thee-- to ask nothing as a favor. I am glad that I have had this privilege, and I think that I shall not suffer by reason of My obedience to Thy will. I shall be glad, therefore, to be with Thee in the glory that I shared with Thee before the world was."

He did not say to the Father, "Do not forget to pay Me; do not forget what Thou didst promise." No. He did the Father's will without any thought of

compensation connected with it. So with us. Anyone who looks for the divine nature merely **as a reward** and feels that it is due him, is taking an improper view. We should feel that to be on the side of righteousness and to be identified with our Lord Jesus is a great privilege, if there be no reward of the divine nature at all; but the thought of the reward is a great incentive to run patiently for something super-abundant, exceedingly beyond what we could have asked or thought.

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::R5067 : page 232::

DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES

--AUGUST 25.--`LUKE 4:16-30`.--

Text: "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not."--`John 1:11`.

THE CHILDHOOD HOME of Jesus was Nazareth, although He was born in Bethlehem. The people of Nazareth would of course feel a certain sense of pride in their fellow-citizen whose fame was spreading throughout all Galilee and Judea. Hearing

::R5068 : page 232::

of the mighty works and wonderful teachings given at Capernaum, they not unnaturally said to themselves, Well, of course He will soon return to His own town and give us a sight of His wonderful power. And yet, they reflected, Is not this Jesus, whose mother and brethren we know, and who has for a long

time been identified with Joseph's carpenter shop?

They could scarcely believe what they had heard. How could it be that so soon after leaving home He had become so famous and so powerful? He never did such miracles in all the years that we knew Him, said they. They did not, of course, understand as we do that He received His power as a special benediction when He was thirty years of age, as a result of His full consecration of His life to the Divine service, that devotion being symbolized by His immersion in Jordan.

THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH

At length He came to Nazareth. It was on a Sabbath day. For long years He had been recognized as one of the few able to read, and had done the congregational reading of the Holy Scriptures. This was therefore just what they wished and expected Him to do on the Sabbath day of His return. He went into the synagogue and received from the custodian the scroll bearing the lesson, and read the lesson for the day.

Thus far all went well; but when Jesus began to comment upon passages of Scripture there was a commotion; first whisperings of disapproval, and finally an outburst of wrath against Him. Ah! they thought, this young man has quite lost His head since He left us! We know indeed that His people of Nazareth have a mean name throughout the country, that ours is reputed to be a mean city of little learning; but who would expect that one of our own citizens would return to our midst and tell us to our faces that we are not worthy of having an exhibition of His power--such as He has given to other cities and to their people!

Their pride and patriotism made them wild. They drove Him out of the

synagogue with angry demonstrations. They insulted and jostled Him and led the way toward the rear of their city, not daring to lay hands on Him, but merely as a mob gnashing upon Him and pushing onward in a direction in which they desired that they might lead Him to the brow of a hill, and then push Him over.

For a little way Jesus went, but then He turned and passed through their midst, overawing them by the dignity of His presence, and perhaps realizing that their course toward Him was merely a corroboration of what He had said respecting their unworthiness to have a share of the blessing of God which He was distributing.

THE TRUTH THAT ANGERED

What were the words that thus angered them? At first we read, "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." What, then, made the change? It was the plain declaration that because they did not appreciate Him enough, because they did not believe in Him fully, therefore it would not be God's will that He should perform any miracles for them. He backed up His statement with illustrations from the past which angered them still more. He said that in Elijah's day there was a famine in the land, and that Elijah was not sent to the widows of Israel, but to a widow across the border, in a Gentile city.

Again, Elisha was not sent to cleanse the lepers of Israel, but did cleanse a Gentile, Naaman. Alas, for the power of pride! "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Instead of the people of Nazareth getting angry and resenting these things, they should have said, Tell us, then, of our faults and help us to overcome them. If God has blessings, surely we, as Israelites, may have our share if we will but come into the right attitude of

heart. Instruct and pray for us. But the proud cannot see their difficulties, hence the Scriptural declaration of the special favor and blessing to the humble.

THE LESSON FROM ISAIAH

The lesson for that Sabbath was from `Isaiah 61:1-3`. It was an excellent text, and the sermon on it was from the very ablest of all teachers. The whole difficulty was with the heart condition of the hearers; and this is true of many a sermon and many a lesson. How His hearers should have rejoiced to know that they were living in the day of the fulfilment of these words! He had been anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit, that He might declare good tidings to the poor. Surely many of them were poor and needy!

We read further that Jehovah sent Jesus to heal the broken-hearted. Oh, how those words ought to have appealed to all in that audience! How they **would** have appealed to any that were broken-hearted! The difficulty probably was that they were hard-hearted. Satan has hardened the hearts of mankind in general. God's promise is that under Messiah's glorious reign He will take away the "stony hearts" and give them "hearts of flesh."

The declaration further was that the blind would receive their sight, that liberty would be granted to the captives, that the bruised and injured would be healed, and that "the acceptable year of the Lord" would be proclaimed. These were indeed wonderful words of life! No wonder we read that "they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth."

"DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES"

This part of the message might have been applied in part to themselves. Were they not captives, bound by the fetters of sin, bound also by the fetters and

chains of heredity, sickness, imperfection and death? Were not some of them actually blind also, as respected the eyes of their understanding? Evidently the time for them to see had not arrived--they were not in the condition to receive the blessing of the anointing of their eyes of understanding. Were they not all bruised by the fall, imperfect, blemished, wounded, sore--mentally, morally and physically-- and was not the Great Deliverer there to set them at liberty, in part at least, from these difficulties? Surely that was a favorable moment, and they were a favored people!

But the work that Jesus was doing was merely the proclamation of these things, with a few illustrations or examples of healing, etc. The real time for Him to accomplish the deliverance of the captives, the liberating of the sin-bruised, and the giving of sight to the blind, that all might sing the praises of God and appreciate His

::R5068 : page 233::

favor--these actual blessings belonged to the Messianic Kingdom time. What Jesus was doing was merely a foreshadowing of the great things to be accomplished future --"In the Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy Prophets."-- `Acts 3:19-21`.

PROCLAIMING "THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR"

This brief expression, so little understood, pointed out the special work of Jesus, far more important than the miracles. The term, "acceptable year," or acceptable time, refers to this entire Gospel Age of more than eighteen centuries. It is "the acceptable time" in the sense that during this period God is willing, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, to accept from amongst the sinners a Little Flock of joint-sacrificers to share with their Redeemer in His

Kingdom.

No opportunity had been granted in the past to become dead with Jesus, to present their bodies living sacrifices, to walk in His footsteps, to fill up the afflictions of Christ, to suffer with Him. The proclamation of this opportunity waited until Jesus had made His own consecration, and all who accepted His Message and became His followers did so under this invitation or proclamation. It was the privilege of becoming the sons of God by a begetting of the Holy Spirit. (`John 1:13`.) The acceptance of these sacrifices began at Pentecost and still continues. Who can say how soon the door of privilege to offer acceptable sacrifices may close? Then the door to the High Calling, to the Bride class, will be shut--forever. Other blessings God has, but not other privileges than those of this Age for suffering with Christ and for participating with Him in His reign of glory.

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::R5068 : page 233::

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

--SEPTEMBER 1.--`MARK 6:14-29`.--

Text: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."-- `Rev. 2:10`**.**

TODAY'S STUDY includes the tragedy connected with John the Baptist's death. King Herod had put away his own wife, and was living unlawfully with the wife of his brother Philip--Herodias--a vain woman apparently and without conscience, who, for ambition's sake, had dared everything that she might

occupy the place of a queen. John the Baptist, a fearless teacher, in his preaching had referred to the fact that King Herod was living in violation of the Divine Law, and that this was likely also to bring upon the people a war, for his wife whom he had put away was the daughter of King Aretas.

Herodias heard of John's teaching, and was both angry and fearful--angry that he should dare to speak so of her relationship to the King--fearful, lest the words of this eloquent man, which greatly moved the masses, might alienate her from the King, or that perhaps the King himself

::R5069 : page 233::

might come under the influence of John's searching words. Had Herod put her away, as would have been his duty, she would have been an ashamed and a disgraced woman in the eyes of the world, for the Herods and their affairs were well known in Rome and elsewhere. So a **denouement** would have left her a pitiable spectacle, and in her pride she was ready to do murder, or anything that would divert such a calamity.

Herod feared John and feared the people who believed John to be a Prophet, but Herodias feared neither God nor man. However, in deference to Herodias' wish, Herod had John arrested for his temerity. Even then Herod liked to hear John talk, though he still kept him a prisoner. All the more Herodias feared the influence of John. She brooded and she schemed. The King's birthday came, and she encouraged him to make it a great day, a festival, and to ask to the banquet his principal friends. In the midst of the carousal she dressed her own daughter in the airy costume of the dancing girls of the East, and sent her in to dance before the King and his friends.

So great a condescension implied that the King should make some return. He

asked the girl what he should give her, promising anything that she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom. This was exactly what the wicked mother had planned; and true to her agreement the child returned for instructions. Herodias had gotten Herod into her net. He had refused to kill John in spite of all her endeavors. Now, in the presence of his friends, on his own birthday, at his own suggestion, he had obligated himself to do anything that might be asked. If the daughter demurred to ask for the head of John the Baptist, the mother probably told her that if John lived both of them would probably sooner or later be outcasts; that his death was necessary.

BOUND BY AN UNHOLY OATH

When the maiden returned and made her request, the King was grieved, yet, not being a humble man, nor a God-fearing man, but merely a proud man with a man-fearing spirit, he felt himself bound to comply with his oath given in the presence of those great men. Was he not King? Was it not his birthday? Had he not freely promised, even though under the influence of intoxicating liquor, and should he now draw back and show the white feather, and simply that he had some confidence in this peculiar Prophet? No! The execution was accomplished; the head was delivered to Herodias; the King's honor (?) was maintained.

Alas, poor world! How many are its snares of pride in the wrong things, and in fear of the wrong person! How many are its attempts to preserve and increase its pleasures and honors!

In a previous study we heard Jesus' words, that no greater Prophet than John had ever arisen. We fully agree that he was a great man, a holy man; a Prophet of the Lord was he. We fully agree that he will have a great reward in the future--with all the holy Prophets, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he will

come forth from the death-state perfect as a man, because he was found faithful, even unto death. He will be one of the class mentioned by the Lord through the Prophet David--"Instead of Thy fathers, shall be Thy children, whom Thou [Messiah] shalt make Princes in all the earth." (`Psa. 45:16`.) John will be one of those glorious Princes on the earthly plane, one of the representatives of Messiah and the Church, who will be on the Heavenly and invisible plane, like unto the angels, partakers of the divine nature.

Those who selected our lesson text evidently overlooked the fact that John the Baptist is not one of the Church class referred to in the Lord's words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (`Rev. 2:10`.) John will indeed get life everlasting as a glorious portion, but he will not be a member of the Bride

::R5069 : page 234::

class, as we have shown. This honor belongs to us who have received Jesus and become His disciples and been begotten of the Holy Spirit, since Pentecost. We again quote St. Paul's words concerning the Ancient Worthies: "All these died in faith, not having received the things promised them," "that they, **without us,** should not be made perfect." (`Heb. 11:13,38-40`.) We, the Church, the Bride class, the Little Flock, called to be joint-heirs with Jesus in His Kingdom, must get our share of the blessing first. The Bride and the Bridegroom must be perfected in the First Resurrection before the Kingdom can be established; and it must be established before the blessing can go to any others--even to the Ancient Worthies.

WHEREIN IS THE DIFFERENCE?

If John the Baptist was faithful unto death, just as faithful as those will be who

have lived since Pentecost, wherein is the difference, and why should he receive an earthly reward and the Bride class receive the heavenly reward? There are several reasons for this. In the matter of justice God could not justly, not properly, show any preference to one person, or to one class; but in matters of grace, of favor, as the Scriptures declare, He may do what He will with His own. If A owed $5 each to B and C, he could not justly give the entire $10 to one of them and repudiate the debt to the other. But if he wished to make presents, gifts, he may give B $1 and C $9, or give the entire $10 to B and nothing to C.

So far as the world was concerned, God was under no obligation whatever to do anything to help Adam and his race; hence the entire matter of redemption is of grace. But since Jehovah entered into covenant with His Son that the latter should pay the redemption price for the world, and then become its Restorer, Jesus, having laid down His life, the matter has passed from being purely of grace, and has connected with it a certain measure of justice between God and Christ.

So far as man is concerned there is a measure of obligation, because God has already stated what the results of the redemption work shall be--"all the families of the earth shall be blessed"; there shall be a "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets." God is therefore bound to humanity by principles of justice, because He has made these promises. Yea, He has given His **oath** that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. St. Paul's argument on this subject is that God has thus bound Himself by two immutable or unchangeable things--His Word and His Oath.

But nothing in God's promise bound Him to give John the Baptist a place in the Bride class. The Apostle Peter declares that God foreknew this class, predestinated it as a **class,** but **not as individuals,** from before the foundation

of the world; and He is now making a selection according to principles, to determine who may be of this class. He gave no opportunity to John the Baptist to be of this class, but in His providence permitted him to die when he had accomplished the work specially intended for him. None could be of this Bride class who died prior to Pentecost, for there the Holy Spirit of adoption and begetting was first given, and without that none could occupy the plane of sons; those under Moses and of his House were servants.

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::R5069 : page 234::

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

My husband and I have entered the Colporteur work and the Lord has wonderfully blessed us.

As we are working in another brother's territory, I write to ask if Shiawassee County, Mich., is being worked. If not, will you assign us this county as soon as possible?

We have taken orders for nearly four hundred books in six days. We each took orders for nine full sets in one day. I never believed I could sell a book and dreaded to go into the work because of my inability to explain the Scriptures; also because I am not much of a talker. But I have found that God can use very poor material to do His work.

We have been greatly blessed and are thankful that we took your advice and

entered the work. May the dear Lord bless you in your work! MRS. S. H. GRIFFIN.--Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD:--

Many of the smaller classes, and perhaps some of the larger ones, do not realize the importance of order in regard to addressing only the brother occupying the chair. As a class we have about overcome this difficulty. We also used to think that it was not necessary to be strict in this because we were so few in number, but I always felt that I should be ashamed if anyone from an orderly class should visit us and witness the disorder.

The Elder of a disorderly class is especially in danger of displaying his lack of obedience to this rule when he visits another class, for he forgets that he is not occupying the chair and unconsciously comments on every expression to the annoyance of the class. I feel that it would not be easy for the leading Elder to correct him, for it would be like correcting your friends' children for misconduct.

Perhaps these friends overlooked the importance of addressing the chair as given on page 327, Vol. VI., and included in a past study. It would surely be beneficial to them to turn to it again with a spirit of obedience in their hearts.

May the Lord continue to bless you as you strive to carry out His will.

Your sister in the dear Redeemer, _____

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Words cannot express my appreciation of the "Meat in due season" committed to your charge to dispense in "My Vow unto the Lord."

What a comfort it has been to me! what a help in keeping on "the whole armor of God"! to keep my heart with all diligence; to bridle my tongue!

Surely it is a wonderful gift from our Heavenly Father, for in every temptation and trial, in every thought, word and action, it helps us to remember our covenant to be dead with our Lord--to endeavor to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

I must confess my tardiness in writing you; I took the Vow a year ago and testified to blessings received, promising then to send in my name. I feel that I have lost a blessing in withholding it so long. J. A. THOMPSON.--Calif.

::R5070 : page 234::

FAITHFUL BARKING COMMENDED

DEARLY BELOVED PASTOR:--

When first reading the article in a past TOWER illustrating our "Old Creature," by a dog, it seemed a little amusing; but recently circumstances here in the Philadelphia ecclesia brought forth the need of studying the parable of the "Sheep."

We learn that all shepherds keep a good "sheep dog," which is gentle, kind, never vicious, but does considerable barking when the sheep are inclined to stray; and all sheep belonging to the dog's owner are **very dear** to the dog. Its sense of smell is **very** acute; if a sheep had been near a wolf the dog would detect it and bark at the wayward one.

Learning the above facts partly answered a puzzle in my mind, namely, whenever any "sheep" in our ecclesia strays from any of the **doctrinal points,** he or she is usually very composed about it, but those watching for such danger-places make a **big fuss** over it. It is talked and talked about. They seem very restless, disturbed, even to loud words.

Questioning the different "barkers" I find each ready to suffer anything if only the wanderer may return--have his eyes opened. So I have concluded that it belongs to the faithful "dog" to bark and bark at even the smell of a wolf, and that to err in the "dog" nature is nothing to compare to erring in doctrine. In other words, dogs would better **bark too much** than not to be watchers and warners of the approach of the wolf. _____

::R5070 : page 235::

BEREAN QUESTION STUDIES

DEAR BRETHREN:--I have been for many years much impressed with the importance of Berean methods of study-- indeed, ever since the Society began to bring them to our attention as specially desirable methods. I have since then aimed to follow them closely in my personal studies, but have realized all the while that, as classes, we were not getting hold of them properly.

A recent visit of the dear brethren, coupled with careful consideration of a letter (Tower, Sept. 15), has impressed the matter upon me as never before. I trust a new impetus has been given to "class" study and, with the thought of possibly adding somewhat to the impression, I am sending out to Ecclesias in this vicinity some suggestions, of which the enclosed is a copy:--

(1) Berean Study is as old as the Church.

(2) The volumes--STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES--like the Scriptures themselves, are full of interrogation points--that is, they suggest questions everywhere.

(3) The average mind is not competent to make the best arrangement of these questions--linking them together in their proper, logical order.

(4) The arranged Questions, furnished by the Brooklyn Tabernacle, supply this lack.

(5) These "Question" Studies have been with us for years.

(6) The Bethel "Table Talks" are on the same general plan--surely a forceful demonstration and endorsement of the method.

(7) They foster concentration of thought, and give a definite aim in study.

(8) They develop ability in analyzing subjects.

(9) They assist all the members of a class to study along uniform lines.

(10) The Church being made up of separate Ecclesias, in proportion as the

method is followed by the different Ecclesias, the Church as a whole is studying along uniform lines.

(11) We acknowledge the value of uniformity by our unanimous adoption of it in use of Daily Hymns and Daily Manna.

(12) They make the leader of a Class less a teacher, thus dividing up with the class, more fully, the responsibility for development.

(13) It encourages Class study, which is surely discouraged in proportion as the leader, either from inclination or as the result of less practical methods, monopolizes the explanation of Studies.

(14) It supplies the best basis for study of the lessons beforehand, and neglect of this spells proportionate failure in **any** method of Class work.

(15) Each member of a Class has a responsibility in this respect which he or she cannot afford to ignore. (It is our opinion that where Classes fail to make the method practical the main difficulty lies (a) in a lack of preparatory study; (b) in failure of the leader to impress its importance.)

(16) Where an Ecclesia lacks "speaking" talent, it supplies a good substitute, and we believe in many cases more than a substitute. We incline to the conviction that less dependence on preaching and more on "class" study should be the order.

(17) Should the appointed leader be absent from any "study," the Class thus equipped could carry along the Study without interruption, any member reasonably well-informed being competent to take charge.

(18) If for any reason it should not be deemed wise to have a regularly appointed leader, different members would be prepared to lead in turn--each member recognizing such a one as leader, while filling the office, directing all questions and answers to him--thus holding the Class to order as effectually as though they had a regularly appointed leader.

(19) Any answer to a question should be supported by at least two good Scriptures. If each member recognizes his or her responsibility in finding these Scriptures, it will guarantee a study which should make any subject interesting to any visitor present who is interested in the Bible.

(20) Should any question come up on any paragraph, after those prescribed for the study have been dealt with, the leader, by turning it over to the Class, instead of answering himself, will make the study the more helpful. (This method of turning questions over to the class would often avoid a delicate situation, should the question be such as would call for an answer which might not be acceptable to the questioner. The leader, in thus sharing the responsibility with the class, could express himself the more freely, and no special objection could be taken.)

(21) With the "Berean Question" method uniformly followed, in any "study" where a specific number of questions are marked off, and kept up with, we would be at home if temporarily present with any Class the world over.

(22) Additionally, we all desire to be as closely in touch with the "isolated" ones as possible, and it would seem that nothing could operate more effectually in this direction than the widest possible application of this principle of oneness in study.

(23) The fact that the Society is continually urging this method gives the

unmistakable inference that WE NEED IT.

Your brother in service, W. W. BLACK.

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::page 235::

BEREAN QUESTIONS IN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

Series VI., Study X.--The Baptism of the New Creation.

AUGUST 4

(1) What is the general consensus of opinion among Christian people regarding baptism? P. 421, par. 1.

(2) As a result of the great falling away from the faith once delivered unto the saints, what were the views regarding water baptism as held by the nominal Church in the second century? and why were "sponsors" required. P. 421, par. 2.

(3) How was the rite of water baptism performed during the third century? P. 421, par. 3.

(4) Describe the Roman and Greek Catholic baptismal ceremonies. Pp. 422, 423.

(5) Why was infant baptism introduced into the Church, and what privileges in this respect were granted to the laity? P. 423, last par.

AUGUST 11

(6) What is the attitude of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches toward baptism? P. 424, par. 1 to 3.

(7) What significance does the Church of England attach to infant baptism? P. 424, last par. and P. 425, top.

(8) Explain the Presbyterian view of baptism? P. 425, par. 4, 5.

(9) What is the position taken by Methodists, Episcopalians and other denominations in general upon this question? Relate an anecdote illustrating the popular idea with respect to infant baptism. P. 425, par. 6, 7.

(10) What does Church history show as respects the origin and development of these erroneous views regarding the necessity and efficacy of baptism? P. 426, par. 2.

AUGUST 18

(11) What is the Scriptural attitude taken by some with respect to infant baptism and immersion in water? P. 427, par. 1, first half.

(12) Explain the unscripturalness of immersing three times, face forward. P. 427, par. 1, latter half.

(13) What is the view of baptism accepted by the "Disciple" denomination? P. 427, par. 2.

(14) Why is this position both unscriptural and unreasonable? P. 428, par. 1.

(15) What is the attitude of "Baptists" with respect to water baptism? P. 429, par. 1, 2.

(16) What would it mean if the Baptist theory were correct? P. 429, par. 3.

AUGUST 25

(17) Is it reasonable to conclude that any one of the denominations includes all the "wheat" and excludes all the "tares"? P. 430, par. 1.

(18) What name is given in Scripture to these divisions among the professed followers of Christ? and what message has gone forth to them? P. 430, par. 2.

(19) What conclusion should prepare us to appreciate the Scripture teaching in **re** baptism? P. 431, par. 1.

(20) Did the Mosaic Law provide for any ceremonies similar to baptism as preached and practiced by John? P. 431, par. 2, to P. 432, line 12.

(21) What was the **motive** back of John's preaching and baptizing? P. 432.

(22) Unto what did John baptize his believers? P. 432, par. 1.

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